Leading and recognizing public value

LEADING AND RECOGNIZING PUBLIC VALUE

Jean Hartley[1], Steven Parker[2], and Jim Beashel[3]

October 2018

[1]The Open University

[2] De Montfort University (formerly at Open University)

[3] Dorset Police (formerly Senior Practitioner Fellow at Open University)

Paper accepted for publication in Public Administration.

ABSTRACT

This article examines the relationship between leadership and public value, which is particularly challenging in a context of explicit contest and conflict. The theoretical framework is illustrated through a case study of policing rural crime. The study reveals that the police worked with multiple and competing publics not a single homogeneous public, and that part of their leadership role was to create and convene a public space in which different voices and divergent views could be expressed. The study notes that research needs to pay attention to the loss and displacement of public value not solely its creation and recognition. The need to convene multiple publics required the police to lead, as part of a leadership constellation, and with political astuteness. The findings have wider relevance for other public services, and for studies of leadership and public value at the intersection between the state and civil society.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of public value is increasingly debated in academic literature on public policy, administration and management (Benington and Moore, 2011; Bryson et al, 2014, 2017; Williams and Shearer, 2011) and applied in public service organizations (Benington and Turbitt, 2007). However, the role of leadership in creating – or destroying – public value is less well explored. There is also a surprising lack of empirical research about public value (Hartley et al, 2017) and even less about leadership (as distinct from management) to create public value.

The article makes several theoretical and empirical contributions to understanding public value and how it is shaped through leadership. The article deploys Benington's (2011) approach to public value as a contested democratic practice, which Sørensen (2016) calls a "game-changer". The empirical research is based on a case study of the policing of rural crime.

First, it advances knowledge and understanding of the publics for whom and with whom public value is created or lost. The analysis shows that there is not a homogeneous public but rather a set of publics, who contend and contest with each other about how particular problems should be addressed, and discuss what public value is being created. Public value has often been spoken of in the literature as a singular concept but the idea of publics implies (and this case shows) different views and priorities about public value. Importantly, the case study illustrates processes of convening publics by a public service. The recent emphasis in the public administration literature on service 'delivery' has occluded the convening role of public services in convening those who need to address problems, yet in this case the police were unable to provide a service without deploying their convening role. This is one of the

few empirical case studies which examines public value in terms of its contribution to the public sphere. Yet, the case shows exclusion from as well as inclusion in the public sphere, indicating that this normative idea has limitations in social and political terms.

Second, the article makes a contribution by analysing not only what public value is created, but what public value is lost or displaced. Public value creation is often in analytical focus, with different approaches to assessing how value is added. This article adds to the less tangible aspects of public value, with value recognised in reassurance, confidence and the willingness of communities to co-produce with the police in areas where police would be ineffective acting alone. Value in part derived from cultural alignment with communities. Such symbolic aspects of public value have, perhaps, been under-emphasised. Additionally, it is important to explore the loss of public value to avoid it becoming simply a normative concept. The case examines where public value was lost in the past; where there were risks of loss because of heightened emotions among rural residents; and where public value may have declined elsewhere because of displacement. This last is a reminder that the success narrative of carefully-boundaried case studies may not be adequate to understand public value from a whole systems perspective.

Third, the article contributes to theory and research by examining how leadership influences public value. The two concepts have been loosely linked in the literature, but close analysis shows that the links have not been fully articulated. The case study adds to understanding leadership constellations (Denis et al, 2001) in creating public value – mobilised by a range of actors and stakeholders from both state and civil society, not solely by leaders in public organizations. The plurality of people, interests and ideas about public value in particular contexts, combined with pluralistic leadership means that leadership theories have to address a considerable degree of complexity and contest, where there is diffuse power and divergent objectives among stakeholders. Leadership with political astuteness is highly relevant and

helps to explain how the police leadership was able to turn a volatile and conflictual situation into one where problems were addressed through co-production. This article, therefore, makes a contribution to the literatures on both public value and leadership, exploring how they are connected conceptually and in practice.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE

Public value

Public value theory was initially developed by Moore (1995), whose focus is primarily on the value added by public organizations and public managers. Much public value writing and research continues in this vein (e.g. Fisher and Grant, 2013). However, more recently, there has been considerable development in conceptualising public value creation as part of wider political, economic and social processes. Bryson et al (2014) outline three main approaches in addition to Moore's (1995, 2013) framework. First, Bozeman (e.g. 2002) examined the societal values that underpin judgements about public value creation. He argues that public value creation is not only created by public organizations but is shaped by normative beliefs, assumptions and values about what is important for society. This perspective prefigures some elements of Benington's (2011) approach to public value. Second, Bryson et al (2014) highlighted the important but less well-known contribution of Meynhardt (2009), which takes a psychological perspective on the human activity of valuing. Third, Bryson et al (2014) reviewed the 'public sphere' approach developed by Benington (2011, 2015), which theorises public value as part of a contested democratic process.

Hartley et al (2017) suggest that while the variety of conceptualisations of public value can create confusion and ambiguity, researchers can address this by being explicit about their chosen theoretical approach. The current article draws on Benington's framework of public

value (Benington 2011, 2015). This conceptualisation of public value has two dimensions. First are the activities, services, outputs and outcomes which the public most values. These can be identified, for example, in the choices the public make in prioritising particular policies or resource allocation decisions over others. However, Benington (2011) argues that public value cannot be derived from aggregated individual choices alone, because a fair and just society needs to consider both longer-term and minority views. Consequently, the second dimension of public value is 'what adds value to the public sphere' (Benington, 2011, p. 43).

Habermas (1962) conceived of the public sphere as an arena where people debate and shape public matters and challenge values, decisions and activities in the market, the state, and civil society, open to all citizens (see also Bryson et al, 2014, Sennett, 1977). Public value can therefore be created by a variety of stakeholders, including public organizations, private firms, non-profits, volunteers and citizens (Benington and Moore, 2011, Bryson et al, 2017). Some scholars argue that the public sphere is not as open as claimed to gender and minority groups (e.g. Fraser, 1990).

Benington (2011) notes that the two dimensions of public value are sometimes in tension. This is seen in policing, where the public may value visible elements of policing (e.g. officers on patrol) but place less value on behind-the-scenes activities (e.g. tackling counter-terrorism or organized crime). Elected politicians, public servants and informal community leaders have to make difficult judgements and choose between competing priorities. Benington notes that public value creation is particularly contested in contexts where the issues are 'wicked' (Rittel and Webber, 1973; Brown and Head, 2018), where there is no clear agreement about the causes of or solutions to problems. When confronting wicked problems, various stakeholders may express divergent values, interests, and ideologies. If a way forward is to be found, they will need to find ways to reach some degree of consensus about priorities for action. Some stakeholders may lose out in terms of their own personal or group

appropriation of public value while others may gain.

Moore's (1995) initial book was about *creating* public value. However, Benington (2011) and Bozeman (2002) note that public value can be lost or destroyed. This is found in empirical work (Esposito and Ricci, 2015; Benington and Turbitt, 2007). Public value stream analysis (Benington and Moore, 2011) or public value mapping (Alford and Yates, 2014) indicates that public value can be undermined, wasted or destroyed through, for example, incivility, factional interests, destructive behaviour, or the mis-appropriation of public resources. Empirical research on public value needs to be alert to the full spectrum of possible outputs and outcomes and not normatively assume there are benefits.

Leadership

The distinction between management and leadership is much debated but not always water-tight. Many commentators conclude that in spite of much overlap a distinction can be made. For example, '*Management skills are used to plan, build, and direct organizational systems to accomplish missions and goals, while leadership skills are used to focus on a potential change by establishing direction, aligning people, and motivating and inspiring*.' (Algahtani 2014, p. 71). In the management literature, the roles of manager and leader sometimes overlap, but the roles are conceptually and theoretically distinct (Kotter, 1990; Wallis and Gregory, 2009).

It is sometimes thought that leadership and public value have been extensively linked theoretically but a short literature survey contradicts this. Early work on public value tended to focus on the role of public managers rather than public leaders (Moore,1995, 2013; Spano, 2009). The strategic triangle, which forms a key part of the Moore (1995) framework, puts the public manager at the centre of public value creation. Another strand of literature uses the language of managers and leaders interchangeably without apparent distinction (e.g.

Williams and Shearer, 2011). In other work, the idea of a public leader is implied, for example, by urging public managers to have "restless, public-value seeking imaginations" (Benington and Moore, 2011:3). This suggests some characteristics that go beyond management into leadership, but this is not theorised.

Some writers map links between leadership and public value arising from the emergence of new patterns of polycentric, multi-level or 'networked governance' (Benington, 2000; Ostrom, 2010). The profound restructuring of the political, economic and social context, and of the inter-relationships between state, market and civil society, have been accompanied by new forms of hybrid organisation, and inter-organisational partnerships. Leadership in these contexts requires a capacity to work across boundaries and beyond formal authority based on hierarchy (Morse and Buss, 2007; Crosby and Bryson, 2005). The re-evaluation of leadership coincided with the greater interest in public value (Morse, 2010, p. 234; DeSeve, 2007).

Three strands of thinking have linked leadership and public value theoretically. First, Crosby and Bryson (2005) argue that networked governance means that effective leadership is collaborative, not only within public organizations but across networks, suggesting a conceptual shift away from leader-centric to systems-centred approaches.

A second strand derives from Benington (Benington, 2011; Benington and Turbitt, 2007). Like Crosby and Bryson (2005), this work emphasises multiple sources of leadership in a polycentric-governance system, but locates leadership as taking place in a number of arenas (Benington, 2015). This pluralist view of public value (with different stakeholders, views and interests) means that there may be a variety of opinions and positions which have to be struggled with, through 'agonistic pluralism' (Mouffe, 2005). This accepts the value of a struggle between competing ideas and interests, but the possibility of, and respect for, a negotiated settlement. Here, leadership involves not only orchestration of different players,

but helping stakeholders find their voice in the public sphere to utilise conflict and coalition for common purpose, and channelling it towards public value outcomes. Benington and Turbitt (2007) illustrate this in an empirical study of policing in Northern Ireland.

A third strand comes from Hartley et al (2015) about leadership with political astuteness. This argues that leadership rarely operates with completely shared goals and acquiescent 'followers', but more often involves leadership having to take into account the subtle dynamics between stakeholders in various arenas. Leadership processes include handling diversity through 'reading' the context and the varied stakeholders, and constructing coalitions to achieve sufficient alignment to create constructive organizational and social purposes. This may involve either informal and formal political processes.

Hartley et al (2015) analysed the processes which underpin politically astute leadership, in a large empirical study. Leadership with political astuteness encompasses an understanding of both 'small p' and 'big P' politics – the formal institutions and actors of the state, but also informal and sometimes subtle factions which exist within groups, communities and organizations but it is more than 'stakeholder analysis' - it is also an active process of influencing others with both 'soft' and 'hard' personal and interpersonal skills while also constructing alliances across sometimes competing interests and remaining alert for strategic opportunities and threats. A recent overview of strategic planning recommended more research on political astuteness, recognising that this goes beyond traditional views of strategy (Bryson et al, 2018). Political astuteness can serve constructive social and organizational goals (Hartley et al, 2015; Baddeley and James, 1987). Political skill is related to leader effectiveness (Douglas and Ammeter, 2004) and leadership with political astuteness can contribute to public value (Hartley et al, 2015). Leadership with political astuteness was found to have five inter-connected capabilities: personal skills; interpersonal skills; reading people and situations; building alignment and alliances; and strategic direction and scanning

(Hartley and Fletcher, 2008).

Much academic literature has conceptualised leadership as involving the creation or pursuit of common goals, vision or values (summarised by Drath et al, 2008). This is less appropriate for considering leadership for public value where issues may be contested and inter-organisational networked governance prevails. This conceptualisation of leadership in the context of agonistic pluralism means that in creating public value, leadership can and will be exercised by a range of actors (Crosby et al, 2017) who aim or claim to represent the public or particular publics (Hartley and Benington, 2010; Prebble, 2018). Leadership with political astuteness becomes highly relevant in this context.

There are many definitions of leadership but here leadership is viewed not solely as positional (formal authority) but as processes of mobilising the attention, resources and practices of others towards particular goals, values and outcomes (Hartley and Benington, 2010; Kempster et al, 2011), in a relational way (Uhl-Bien, 2006). Leadership may be exercised by leadership constellations (Denis et al, 2001) in individuals, pairs, teams, organizations and networks.

The above review of some of the literatures about public value and about leadership enables the key research question to be framed: whether and how does leadership with political astuteness help police leaders to create public value in a contested context? The article now turns to examine this in an empirical study of rural crime.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The research question is explored through a case study, which enables the examination of social processes over time, and where there may be multiple perspectives on the situation (Yin, 2009; Hartley, 2004). The case is based on a highly contentious issue which provoked

strong feelings and presented the police service with several dilemmas about how to achieve public value.

The case study took place over several months. It focused on rural crime, particularly hare-coursing. Hare-coursing is the use of dogs such as greyhounds and other sighthounds to pursue hares across open fields, in flat landscapes and kill them by shaking them violently. It has been illegal in the UK since 2005. Hare-coursers often illegally bet significant sums of money on dogs so these activities, and related damage and crimes, cause much concern to rural communities.

The research was undertaken using two methods. Thirteen interviews were held with a range of stakeholders relevant to hare-coursing and wider rural crime in Eastshire (pseudonym). Documents about the policing strategic plan, wildlife crime and rural crime in Eastshire were analysed, including from East Constabulary (pseudonym).

Interviewees included the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)[1], the chief constable and other senior police officers; police officers in the Rural Crime Action Team (RCAT); representatives of rural organisations such as Countryside Watch; the Countryside Landowners' Association; the National Farmers Union; a diocesan representative of the church; a rural gamekeeper; and a business owner. Interviews included discussions with a (gypsy) traveller and two traveller liaison workers[2] (one an ex-traveller). Those participating in hare-coursing events are often from a traveller background. The traveller and traveller liaison officers were from another county because the researchers were unable to obtain such interviews in Eastshire. This was advantageous, avoiding potential problems of surfacing

[1] Elected to hold the local police to account

[2] Traveller liaison officers help travellers with their health and welfare issues. They also provide advice and support to landowners and settled communities, and mediation between the groups.

criminality in the case locality. The case therefore included views from all those stakeholders affected by hare-coursing.

Public value was defined for the research as the valuable activities and outcomes which were sought by interviewees from policing priorities and which were seen by them as contributing to the good of society. Interviewees were asked about the problems and challenges of rural crime; how these were or were not addressed by the police and others in the locality; what were the outcomes being sought for the locality and society; what interviewees saw as key police priorities, and what benefits or dis-benefits were achieved through police work, especially the RCAT. All interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed and analysed thematically.

The case includes both current and retrospective data over five years. The case concentrates particularly on the present actions and leadership in relation to hare-coursing and rural crime, such as heritage crime (e.g. theft from churches) and farm crime, more generally. For several events in the case, there were accounts of the same event from different interviewees.

FINDINGS

Eastshire is geographically flat, arable and largely (three-quarters) rural, with several urban centres. Many people are employed in agriculture, field sports, estate management and other rural businesses. Large farms, estates and agricultural cottages may be very isolated, particularly where they border neighbouring counties, so police response to incidents can be distant in miles and slow in time.

Eastshire's flat landscape has a strong population of hares, which is highly attractive to illegal hare-coursers. Eastshire police dealt with over 800 hare-coursing incidents in the season prior to the research. Hare-coursers visiting the area drive onto land in 4x4 vehicles often causing damage to crops, fields, and gates. Large illegal bets are placed by participants and

large sums of money can change hands over betting and the sales of the best dogs, all unregulated. There can be additional problems of intimidation if hare-coursers are challenged: a gamekeeper reported that a hare-courser had threatened to '*smash your head in, we'll kill you'.* Interviewees stated that hare-coursers took opportunities to commit other crimes while on the land, such as theft of farm machinery and lead from church roofs. It was widely believed that many of those involved in hare-coursing were travellers. Traveller and traveller liaison interviews suggested that hare-coursing was valued by some of their community, both as tradition and social gathering.

Hare-coursing was seen as a 'signal crime', indicating that other crimes on farms, churches and rural businesses were happening, raising anxieties about other problems locally. Such crimes placed a high financial burden on the rural community. Regulating hare-coursing was therefore seen by rural people as an indicator of the success of their police force. Seeing large numbers of hare-coursers carrying out illegal activities without being challenged by the police had a significant impact on the confidence local people had in the police.
An earlier Rural Crime Action Team (RCAT) had been active but financial austerity pressures had led to the RCAT being disbanded five years previously. Other services had been prioritized over rural crime, focusing on protecting the public from the risks that the police as professionals knew they faced even where this was not evident to the public themselves.

However, after the RCAT was disbanded, the rural community and countryside organisations highlighted an increase in the prevalence and aggression of hare-coursers. Locals found police response times poor and police officers who attended had little knowledge of the rural community and their issues. East Constabulary implemented short-term operations on rural crime but with mixed success. Rural residents became increasingly frustrated about the police service, while the police became worried that one farmer or another would take the law

into their own hands with the grave risk of vigilantism and violence and that this could lead to a '*Tony Martin' situation'*[3].

The Chief Constable attended the Annual General Meeting of Countryside Watch, (a voluntary organization concerned to reduce rural crime). It was attended by around 300 angry people, conveying their feelings of isolation, intimidation and deep frustration. The Chief Constable and other interviewees described the meeting as extremely vociferous. Wanting to avoid violence, and recognising the strength of local concern, the Chief Constable decided to rapidly re-establish an RCAT. However, this time RCAT police officers were selected from volunteers within the force, which meant that knowledgeable and committed police officers joined it. The police leadership equipped the RCAT team with relevant equipment, including 4x4 vehicles and scrambler motorbikes, so that officers could easily drive along muddy tracks and onto fields. The equipment helped to restore public confidence by signalling that the police were up to the job in this physical location.

The benefits of the new approach, with an RCAT, were appreciated by the rural community. First, *reassurance* was a key element, reducing the community's sense of isolation and acknowledging that the countryside can make people feel unsafe:

> *'The RCAT provides a huge comfort to the rural community, people see that the police are taking the issue seriously as there is a dedicated team' (Campaigning organisation).*

While the RCAT provided reassurance, the community was realistic about the limits of RCAT provision, enhanced by the police communicating this limitation clearly. This was augmented by the reported willingness of the RCAT to listen and talk, as well as take action, crucial to reassuring the community in their isolation and fear. Regular information bulletins,

[3] Tony Martin was a farmer in a different locality who shot dead an intruder to his farmhouse and injured another. He had previously complained to police about earlier burglaries. He was convicted of murder, reduced to manslaughter on appeal (Jones, 2012). The case gained high national profile in UK media.

networking and joint working increased confidence between the police and rural communities:

> *'You are dealing with a specialist team who understand the issues and context of what's happening. I think this benefits farmers, rural business, the NFU and the CLA' (Gamekeeper).*

Furthermore, the RCAT was described as having legitimacy because its officers understood rural issues, including knowing the right technical and farming terminology. One RCAT police officer:

> *'…looks and acts like a gamekeeper but he is a police officer…I went to a meeting on poaching and he was wearing the classic rural uniform of pullover and patches and it went down well as he fitted in – a perception thing – but this helped' (Community organisation).*

Additionally, interviewees said that the RCAT had reduced the likelihood that rural residents would take vigilante action, a distinct and serious risk before the RCAT was recreated:

> *We almost got to the point where vigilante action would have happened - if the RCAT was removed now, then there would be a huge loss of confidence '(Campaigning organisation).*

The RCAT was seen to prevent other crimes by being in touch with rural communities and detecting other offences, including heritage and farm-equipment crimes. This positive perception was associated with an increased willingness to work with the police on initiatives to prevent or catch hare-coursers:

> *'We conducted a joint operation with [a gamekeeper] which led to a good positive job in area – it's good to have that co-ordination' (Police officer).*

However, interviewees indicated that community confidence had been reduced by the earlier withdrawal of the RCAT:

'the organisation [police] started pushing back and said it was not a priority and then it was taken away! We had made good progress (at that time) with reports of hare-coursing down' (Campaigning organisation).

Interviewees said that the police suffered from a loss of support when there was no RCAT, and rural people had felt let down. Confidence in the police had also been lost when urban police officers turned up at a rural location and did not appear to know what they were doing:

When the previous RCAT disbanded it wasn't good ……a lot of the coppers didn't know the difference between a hare and a rabbit' (Gamekeeper). '

This lack of knowledge and experience among earlier police officers had reduced some interviewees' confidence in contacting them.

The rural knowledge of RCAT officers could help in other ways:

'as all the (RCAT) team are from a farming background we know the characteristics of the farm. i.e. we know if people are exaggerating' (Police officer).

The very success of the RCAT may have displaced hare-coursing to neighbouring counties:

'Has [neighbouring county] seen a rise? Yes, it has affected [three other counties] …it's likely to be due to the fact we have displaced it all out of Eastshire. The clear message is don't go coursing in Eastshire! (Senior police officer).

The re-establishment of the RCAT was not without contention across the whole county, where there were different publics with different needs and priorities. Interviewees recognized that rural crime was in competition with other claims on police time and resources:

'You could never compare rural crime with child abuse, so people understand resources are needed there but also that as they pay taxes they should have some support' (Campaigning organisation).

One interviewee questioned whether the RCAT could compete with international crime networks who '*run rings*' around small local police teams:

> *'We should try and take a national perspective and this would be better. I think it's better to pool resources'. (Church representative).*

The police had to weigh up multiple priorities:

> *'The public will often say to me that they want to see more police on the streets…what I say is that even if I had the resources to do that or to have a cop behind every vehicle it would not protect them against other issues such as cybercrime, fraud etc'. (Senior police officer).*

Value was derived from long-term perspective and commitment. Maintaining a relatively small team of police experts who understand the 'modus operandi' of rural crime was valuable for rural residents. The loss of this service would risk losing community confidence and cooperation a second time, several interviewees felt.

A neglected but contentious issue for public value was the role of travellers in the rural community. Only one interviewee had personally known a traveller, and no organizations had direct links. This contrasted with police interaction with other minority groups in civil society.

From a traveller perspective, value was created through hare coursing having social benefits alongside monetary value. However, one traveller support worker acknowledged that coursing could make a mess of land, describing young travellers as '*an antisocial bunch'* who are not afraid of prosecution. One traveller felt discriminated against:

> *'It's prejudicial as high court judges go hunting and for us it's our tradition as well…..I live in the countryside as well, but I feel I am prejudiced against'. (Traveller).*

With these different publics and different priorities, leadership was exercised by different people in a variety of roles and organizations. The Chief Constable exercised leadership through his decision to re-create and sustain the RCAT. This was undertaken outside the usual organizational decision-making processes but he placed a high value on being proactive, fast and authoritative after attending the highly-emotional large meeting, where new civil society leaderships were emerging and where vigilantism was a high risk.

The Chief Constable's leadership was described as genuinely motivational for RCAT officers. They felt that by '*sticking his neck out'* he deserved loyalty:

> *'The Chief is very proactive and that helps us out - everything seems to be more integrated' (Police officer).*

The police strategic lead for rural crime exercised leadership in engaging with rural communities. He attended numerous meetings, reassuring attendees and he was held in high regard, despite levels of anger about hare-coursing. He championed communities' concerns. Formal political leadership was exercised by the elected PCC. Like the chief constable, the PCC was politically astute about prioritising services:

> *'…if you just delivered what the public want it would be a bobby on every street! My role is balancing what the public want with what they need' (PCC)*

The police service leadership operated in part through hierarchy (by rank), but interviews indicated that leadership supported bottom-up innovation and experimentation, e.g. how the RCAT organized itself. There was distributed leadership within the RCAT and in its informal partnership working across organizations and with communities. Tasks were dispersed and in the RCAT there was a cultural tolerance for new ideas and a respect for skills. Leadership initiative was encouraged and exercised at any rank or in any role in the RCAT. It was defined less by procedures than by police officers working in ways to

understand, gain more information about, and address complex problems. The chief constable provided this approach through fostering a wider climate in which police officers and others felt able to speak up.

Shared leadership to tackle rural crime was not only a police responsibility, but was enhanced by collaborative leadership between them and rural residents and organisations. The police covered large distances and weighed up different aspects of intelligence about crime and potential crime. They were unable to undertake policing alone, given the distances and scattered population, so other agencies co-produced leadership that challenged established functional boundaries.

Leadership with political astuteness by the police was evident through the actions of the chief constable, the PCC and the head of the RCAT. A key aspect of their political astuteness was having skills to read a context or situation and discern the needs of different stakeholders, with their different goals, values or priorities. For example, the Chief Constable's rapid re-establishment of the RCAT and recognition that rural crime needed urgently addressing was an example of political astuteness in that he recognised that the rural community would not wait longer for action and might take the law into their own hands. At the same time, he reported feeling under pressure from national inspection bodies to deprioritise rural crime, but was able to discern the interests and needs of rural communities and place those alongside other demands:

> *'Sometimes [what]gets forgotten that these are ordinary people trying to earn a living.'* (Chief Constable).

He also commented:

> *"As you become more senior you do deal with a different level of stakeholder who you want to work collaboratively with in order to improve the lives of people…… I have made decisions that are politically unpopular"* (Chief Constable).

He was expected to work with models of demand management but carefully assessed the interests and priorities of different stakeholders, while ensuring that the reputation and legitimacy of his police service was not damaged.

The PCC exhibited political astuteness by not losing sight of longer-term issues. He felt that the RCAT was a positive achievement, but he was also focused on issues on the horizon, including joint working with other blue-light services. The PCC stated that leadership involved fostering a wide network of relationships in order to understand different interests and opportunities to create benefits for society.

DISCUSSION

This section examines questions about leadership and public value arising from the case study. There are relatively few studies of rural crime, and none to our knowledge from a public value perspective. We show how this topic has wider applicability in relation to public value and leadership.

Multiple publics with divergent views of public value The police leadership recognised that they were working with multiple publics, holding different views about what is valuable for the police to do. There are urban majorities and rural minorities; law-breakers (hare coursers) and law-keepers (rural workers and residents); and in this volatile environment a risk of law-abiding citizens shifting into law-breakers. There are also publics who are sometimes overlooked (engaging with travellers to prevent not just tackle hare-coursing). Far from working with "the public" as a homogeneous whole the police work with multiple

publics, and they will inevitably disappoint or frustrate the preferences of some, and did so in this case. The case analysis illustrates that the public is rarely a single entity.

Moore (2013) argues that studying policing can focus a "bright light" on public value (p. 71). Policing is a regulatory service (as well as a welfare service) so not all publics value what the police do as a service. The hare-coursers would prefer the 'service' not to exist. The role of the police is to regulate the behaviour of some individuals and groups in the wider "public interest". Those being regulated have an 'obligation' not a 'service' encounter (Moore, 2013, Alford, 2016), and this is also seen in other public services e.g. aspects of social work, healthcare and environmental protection. However, to date, there has been less conceptual development of obligation encounters in the public administration field (Alford, 2016). The policing case illustrates that any public value framework cannot be conceptualised in the language of "customers" or even solely citizens, but rather that there are multiple publics with different interests.

The role of the police in convening publics One approach for the police to deal with multiple publics is to focus on the law, as a written manifestation of a settled position on public value, and to use their legitimate powers of arrest and prosecution to create public value. In some situations or contexts, such an approach may be sufficient. However, in this case, before the re-creation of the RCAT, this approach was not working for some publics and the police strategy was ineffective and lacked timeliness. This undermined the community's trust and confidence in them and some publics were not persuaded by the law alone and considered vigilantism. Furthermore, the loss of confidence and trust in the police jeopardised other police activities and other public value creation.

Following heightened emotion in the rural community, the police chose a new approach by listening to the views and voices of different publics and bringing them into the public sphere. This was undertaken by all police ranks, in different locations and with various

communities. According to residents and workers they felt listened to and they saw this as a key part of police effectiveness.

Academics point to the construction of publics for particular purposes or in particular locations by a range of actors (Benington, 2015; Newman and Clarke, 2009; Dewey, 1927). By bringing different publics into the public sphere to listen and debate, trust was re-established which facilitated the rural communities to work together and become engaged in problem-solving. The meetings and conversations created a sense of a space where problems could be raised, different perspectives explored and different strategies mapped out, not only in relation to hare-coursing but rural crime generally. Rather than a cacophonous set of voices and publics, the police drew, over time, the various factions and parts of the rural community into a space where different views could be accommodated.

This is Habermas' (1962) public sphere, which Benington (2015) argues is so critical to public value. By listening actively and carefully (and taking action which demonstrated listening) the police were able to shift people away from impulsive action and into the public sphere. For this to happen, the communities had to re-establish and develop trust in the police. Trust seems to be important for the creation and maintenance of the public sphere. By way of contrast, the Grenfell Tower fire (where over 70 people died in London in 2017) has been able to draw together different voices and publics, but public authorities have not yet been able to bring those voices into the public sphere to tackle the problems collaboratively because of insufficient trust (Ireton, 2017).

The police in this rural crime study provided a convening role (Benington, 2015) by bringing together different publics safely to explore issues in the public domain that mattered to them. Mouffe (2005) argues that the ability to engage in 'agonistic' rather than antagonistic exploration of difference is a key aspect of democratic practice. This can be an important

element of creating and recognizing public value where there are contested values from different publics.

The case illustrates how public value creation is more than simply what the public values, based on aggregated individual priorities. It is about working with different and various publics, through a contested democratic process, using debates and interactions which help to create and sustain a lively public sphere.

Public administration has paid considerable attention to the service element of public services (e.g. Osborne et al, 2013) but there has been less attention paid to the role of public service organizations in convening publics not just the 'delivery' of services. This perspective would benefit from future research attention.

Exclusion from the public sphere Despite the convening role of the police, one public was not actively brought into the public sphere. Travellers were at the periphery in these rural communities both demographically (they were mainly visitors not residents) and in social status. The police, from our interviews, did little to engage with them as members of the public with their own views and perspectives. The case adds to the critique of Fraser (1990) that access to the public sphere is not equal. She emphasised the gender bias in Habermas's ideal notion of the public sphere, but her critique applies to other minority interests within society. Further research into access to the public sphere and its impact on public value is warranted.

The discernment and creation of public value The case is interesting because rurality is a relatively unusual feature in public value research. Paying attention to rural crime reinforces the importance of examining public value beyond simply what the public values. The elected PCC and the Chief Constable both held out against pressures arising from other national and local priorities, and discerned the value of paying attention to rural concerns and issues. In a highly urban nation like the UK, rural populations are a minority. A majoritarian view of

public value might deem the RCAT too low in policing priorities, given that demand and public expectation are rapidly rising and exceed police resources. Indeed, earlier in the case, the RCAT had been disbanded precisely on the grounds of rural issues having less benefit to fewer people. However, the dimension of what adds value to the public sphere illuminates how public value may be created through reassurance for geographically isolated individuals and communities, trust, a willingness of residents to provide information to the police, and their role in co-producing joint operations; and the role of the police in convening a public sphere even in this sparsely populated area.

Loss and displacement of public value This research, unusually, examined the loss and displacement of public value, which is under-researched (Benington, 2011; Esposito and Ricci, 2015; Bozeman, 2002). This research found public value loss when the original RCAT disbanded, leaving rural communities feeling abandoned, with a reported decline in trust and confidence in the police, and with wider reverberations on police work. Withdrawing a service may not only lead to the absence of a service but may influence longer-term relationships, and shape perceptions of legitimacy, credibility and trust. It illustrates that public value is not only about what can be counted and measured, but what is lost or destroyed.

The research identified displaced public value. As public value in one locality improved, it was thought to have declined in another. This is a familiar issue for police crime-fighting (Guerrette and Bowers, 2009). We suggest that displaced public value is a useful concept, with the need to research what happens when public organisations manage similar problems in isolation or as competitors, rather than acting within a whole systems approach. The concept of displaced value challenges the idea that components of created value will always aggregate into a greater good.

Leadership constellations Leadership is one means by which public value is created, lost or displaced. The concept of multiple publics rather than a unitary notion of the public has important implications for leadership. Notably, leadership was exercised by a range of actors not solely by public managers, as Bryson et al (2017) would predict in a shared-power world. While the police exercised leadership, so did others. The hare-coursers organised their field 'sport', whilst Countryside Watch and other groups initiated dissent and channelled potential action which cut across the police's original rural crime strategy. Police leadership, while it had authority, did not always have legitimacy in the eyes of particular publics and it risked losing the confidence (and 'followership') of large and influential parts of rural communities when it focused on the narrower role of leading the police organization to tackle crime. Police leadership had to operate in the context of a leadership constellation including both the state and civil society.

The case illustrates that creating public value required more than management (though that has its place). Leadership goes beyond management in finding and creating new ways of identifying and solving problems and in mobilising support for particular values, goals and resources. The police exercised leadership by agilely recognising the value of recreating the RCAT, ensuring this happened rapidly and with close attention to resourcing the new initiative with knowledgeable and committed staff, and with appropriate equipment. This reassured rural communities, rebuilt trust in the police, and mobilised co-production. The case identifies some critical moments for leadership where a wrong move by the police leadership might have exacerbated tensions (e.g. the angry public meeting but also interactions in other meetings and with local people). If not handled well, leadership could have destroyed public value. This reinforces that public value is often dynamic, is temporally situated and requires active and alert leadership.

Leadership with political astuteness Leading in the context of different publics involves many skills and processes for leading in collaborative or networked governance, for example, in collaboration and influence (DeSeve, 2007; Wallis and Gregory, 2009). However, this case goes beyond influencing skills to illuminate how political astuteness is a valuable capability for working with multiple publics. Political astuteness has a number of dimensions (Hartley et al, 2015), including personal and interpersonal skills such as active listening, making people feel valued, and developing wide networks of relationships (all exhibited by the RCAT team). The police leadership at chief constable and RCAT team leader levels exhibited close attention to the 'reading' of people and situations – understanding that different stakeholders may have different interests, goals and desired outcomes, and they undertook this 'reading' in an initially febrile climate. The police leadership created alignment and alliances (a further dimension of political astuteness), in convening a public sphere and encouraging groups to add their voices. The alignment excluded travellers so this is not cosy consensus but coalition-building based on a hard-headed sense of what may be achievable in circumstances where feelings had been running high. Finally, political astuteness involves strategic direction and scanning: the police used their authority to create a strong sense of strategic purpose and direction for tackling rural crime, ensuring that the focus was not solely on hare-coursing but that it was tackled as a signal crime with implications for wider rural crime.

Political astuteness is critical for leadership where there are diverse and sometimes competing interests (Hartley and Fletcher, 2008). The 'reading' of multiple publics is dynamic and complex and these are generally not the passive 'followers' so frequently assumed in the leadership literature (noted by Morse, 2010). Instead, these publics can often exercise leadership themselves, with their own sources of power. In a collaborative governance context there are many situations where leaders must lead beyond their formal authority to

reach out to coalitions and groups (Hartley and Benington, 2010) to create public value in a context of contest and division, where there are several publics. Leadership with political astuteness is a way of addressing that pluralism by starting with assumptions of diversity and variety in interests and exercising relational and purposeful leadership which reflects that condition.

The findings, their interpretation and their links to the wider literature are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1 about here

CONCLUSIONS

There is less empirical research about leadership to create public value than is sometimes assumed and the reviewed literature indicates that analysis is overdue, both conceptually and empirically. Hare-coursing, as a signal rural crime, was the case study used to examine key issues about mobilising and leading public value creation. It reveals processes which have wider relevance for how public value is conceptualised and how leadership is understood.

In this research, the police exercised their leadership in the context of multiple publics, where there were varied views about policing priorities. There was not a single 'public value' but rather a variety of voices and views about what value was created and where. The police were unable to maintain confidence and trust from rural communities by creating public value only by using their lawful authority. They convened a public sphere - spaces and places where different views could be heard and listened to - with action following. This case study explores a concept of public value being about not only what the public values but also what adds value to the public sphere (Benington, 2015). The case also illuminates an under-developed aspect of public value – that it can be lost and displaced as well as created.

This study links public value and leadership in ways which are relatively uncharted. The recognition of a variety of publics, with varied interests invokes the need to consider leadership not solely management. This is particularly necessary for contested issues where there are no clear answers, and where there are competing views about value and priorities, and jostling leaderships. In this pluralist context, leadership with political astuteness, with its personal, rational, political, emotional and strategic qualities, was important to police leadership, as it enabled them to work with and across different publics with different interests, goals and different senses of the public value to be created. This article has explicitly theorised links between leadership and public value.

Acknowledgements

We thank Natalie Benton and James Sutherland of Cambridgeshire Constabulary for research access, and John Benington for stimulating discussions about this paper.

REFERENCES

Alford, J. (2016). Co-production, interdependence and publicness: Extending public service-dominant logic. *Public Management Review,* 18, 673-691.

Alford, J. and Yates, S. (2014). Mapping public value processes. *International Journal of Public Sector Management,* 27, 334-352.

Algahtani, A. (2014). Are leadership and management different? A review. *Journal of Management Policies and Practices, 2,* 3, 71-82.

Baddeley, S. and James, K. (1987). Owl, fox, donkey or sheep: Political skills for managers. *Management Education and Development*, 18, 3-19.

Benington, J. (2011). From private choice to public value. In J. Benington and M. Moore. (eds), *Public value: Theory and practice*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, pp. 31-49.

Benington, J. (2015). Public value as a contested democratic practice. In J. Bryson, B. Crosby and L. Bloomberg (eds), *Creating public value in practice*. Boca Raton, FL: Taylor and Francis, pp. 29-48.

Benington, J. and Moore, M. (2011). *Public value: Theory and practice.* Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Benington, J. and Turbitt, I. (2007). Adaptive leadership and the policing of the Drumcree demonstrations in Northern Ireland. *Leadership*, 3, 371–95.

Bozeman, B. (2002). Public-value failure: When efficient markets may not do. *Public Administration Review*. 62, 145-161.

Brown, P. and Head, B. (2018) Navigating tensions in co-production: A missing link in leadership for public value. *Public Administration*, doi/abs/10.1111/padm.12394.

Bryson, J, Crosby, B, and Bloomberg, L. (2014). Public value governance: Moving beyond traditional public administration and the new public management. *Public Administration Review*, 74, 445-456.

Bryson J, Edwards L and van Slyke D. (2018). Getting strategic about strategic planning research. *Public Management Review*, *20,* 317-339.

Bryson, J., Sancino, A., Benington, J. and Sørensen, E. (2017). Towards a multi-actor theory of public value co-creation. *Public Management Review*, 19, 640-654.

Crosby, B. and Bryson, J. (2005). *Leadership for the common good*. New York: Wiley.

Crosby, B. 't Hart, P., and Torfing, J. (2017). Public value creation through collaborative innovation. *Public Management Review*, 19, 655- 669.

Denis, J-L, Lamothe, L. and Langley, A. (2001). The dynamics of collective leadership and strategic change in pluralistic organizations. *Academy of Management Journal, 44*, 809-837.

DeSeve, E. (2007). Creating public value using managed networks. In R Morse, T Buss, and M Kinghorn. (eds) *Transforming public leadership for the 21st century*. London: Routledge.

Dewey, J. (1927). *The public and its problems*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press.

Douglas, C. and Ammeter, A. (2004). An examination of leader political skill and its effect on ratings of leader effectiveness. *Leadership Quarterly, 15,* 537-550.

Drath, W., McCauley, C., Palus, C., Van Velsor, E., O'Connor, P. and McGuire, J. (2008). Direction, alignment, commitment: Toward a more integrative ontology of leadership. *Leadership Quarterly,* 19, 635–653.

Esposito, P. and Ricci, P. (2015). How to turn public (dis)value into new public value? Evidence from Italy. *Public Money and Management,* 35, 227 -231.

Fisher, J. and Grant, B. (2013). Public value: Recovering the ethical for public sector managers. *International Journal of Public Administration,* 36, 248–255.

Fraser, N. (1990). Rethinking the public sphere: A contribution to the critique of actually existing democracy. *Social Text,* 25/26, 56-80.

Guerrette, R, and Bowers, K. (2009). Assessing the extent of crime displacement and diffusion of benefits: A review of situational crime prevention evaluations. *Criminology, 47,* 1331-1368.

Habermas, J. (1962, trans. 1989). *The structural transformation of the public sphere.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Hartley J. (2004). Case study research. In Cassell C and Symon G (eds) *An essential guide to qualitative research methods in organizations.* London: Sage. 321-333.

Hartley, J., Alford, J., Hughes, O. and Yates, S. (2015). Public value and political astuteness in the work of public managers: The art of the possible. *Public Administration,* 93, 195-211.

Hartley, J., Alford, A, Knies, K. and Douglas, S. (2017). Towards an empirical research agenda for public value theory. *Public Management Review,* 19, 670 – 685.

Hartley, J. and Benington, J. (2010). *Leadership for Healthcare.* Bristol: Policy Press.

Hartley, J and Fletcher, C. (2008). Leadership with political awareness. In K. James and J. Collins. (eds) *Leadership perspectives: Knowledge into action* London: Palgrave.

Ireton, E. (2017). The Grenfell Tower public inquiry: managing expectations. S*olicitors Journal*.

Jones, J. (2012). Looking beyond the 'rural idyll': Some recent trends in rural crime', *Criminal Justice Matters, 89,* 8-9.

Kempster, S. Jackson, B. and Conroy, M. (2011). Leadership as purpose: Exploring the role of purpose in leadership practice. *Leadership 7,* 317–334.

Kotter, J. (1990). *What leaders really do.* Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

Moore, M. (1995). *Creating public value: Strategic management in government.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Moore, M. (2013). *Recognizing public value.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Morse, R. (2010). Integrative public leadership: Catalyzing collaboration to create public value. *Leadership Quarterly, 21,* 231–245.

Morse, R. and Buss, T. (2007). The transformation of public leadership. In R. Morse, T. Buss, and M. Kinghorn (eds.) *Transforming public leadership for the 21st century*. London: Routledge.

Mouffe, C. (2005). *On the political*. London: Routledge.

Newman, J and Clarke, J. (2009). *Publics, politics and power: Remaking the public in public services*. London: Sage.

Osborne, S., Radnor, Z., and Nasi, G. (2013). A new theory for public service management? Toward a (public) service-dominant approach. *American Review of Public Administration,* 43, 135–158.

Ostrom, E. (2010). Beyond markets and states: Polycentric governance of complex economic systems. *American Economic Review, 100,* 641-672.

Prebble, M. (2018). Is 'we' Singular? The Nature of Public Value. *American Review of Public Administration. 48,* 103-118.

Rittel, H. and Webber, M. (1973). Dilemmas in a general theory of planning', *Policy Sciences,* 4, 155–69.

Sennett, R. (1977). *The fall of public man.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sørensen, E. (2016). Public Value. *Conference Paper, Lillehammer University, Norway*, December.

Spano, A. (2009). Public value creation and management control systems. *International Journal of Public Administration, 32,* 328-348.

Uhl-Bien, M. (2006). Relational leadership theory: Exploring the social processes of leadership and organizing. *Leadership Quarterly 17,* 654-676.

Wallis, J. and Gregory, R. (2009). Leadership, Accountability and public value: Resolving a problem in "new governance? *International Journal of Public Administration, 32,* 250-273.

Williams, I. and Shearer, H. (2011). Appraising public value: Past, present and futures. *Public Administration 89,* 1367–1384.

Yin, R. (2009). *Case Study Research*. London: Sage.

Table 1: Leading and recognising public value: Summary of findings

Key contribution	*Case study findings*	*Underlying theory and concepts*
Multiple publics with divergent views of public value	Urban majorities and rural minorities; law-breakers and law-keepers; risk of rural residents becoming law-breakers; obligatees not only service-users.	Public value as a contested democratic process (Benington, 2015)
Role of police in convening publics not solely enforcing the law	Being proactive in the angry meeting; setting up meetings with landowners and residents; listening and reassurance; building trust through listening and action	The public sphere (Habermas, 1962). Public value as contributing to the public sphere (Benington, 2015)
Exclusion from the public sphere	Travellers (gypsies) not engaged with by police in prevention work.	Limitations of access to public sphere (Fraser, 1990)
Creation of public value	Confidence of rural residents/workers through police officers' knowledge of rural affairs; greater cooperation leading to greater reporting of hare-coursing; co-production of joint operations to catch hare-coursers; other rural crimes addressed through interactions over hare-coursing.	What the public values, and what adds value to the public sphere (Benington, 2015).
Loss or displacement of public value	Original disbanding of RCAT created anger, frustration and loss of trust in police; displacement of hare-coursing to neighbouring counties.	The destruction of public value (Bozeman, 2002)
Leadership constellations	Leadership exhibited by police at force and RCAT level, by civil society, countryside watch organization, by illegal hare-coursers.	Leadership constellations (Denis et al, 2001)
Leadership with political astuteness	Addressing conflict and contest; leading beyond formal authority; being proactive to prevent vigilantism; reading the interests of diverse stakeholders; creating coalitions to achieve public value; addressing different county and local police priorities.	Hartley et al (2015) Agonistic pluralism (Mouffe, 2005)